

The piano has a great many different wires, called *strings*, as you will notice when you look inside the instrument. If you are very observing you will discover that for each bass tone there is one long, heavy wire. As you go up the scale, you will come to a place where each tone is produced by the hammer striking two smaller wires. By the time we get about a third of the way up the keyboard, we discover that each tone is produced by three fine wires tuned to the same pitch.

Every one of the wires of the piano has been stretched very tightly, so that altogether the pull of this great number of wires is exceedingly strong. For this reason the *frame* of the piano is made of heavy metal, over which is laid the wooden soundboard. The wires are attached to little pegs screwed into the wood, which must be hard enough to hold these pegs firmly when they are tightened by the piano tuner. That is how the piano is put into tune. Each peg is turned until the wire is stretched tightly enough to produce the proper pitch. Even so, when the temperature of a room changes or when the piano is played and the strings vibrate, the wood of the soundboard is bound to yield a little here and there. That is why all pianos will get out of tune even when they may not be in use.

There is another thing about the piano which it will be interesting to observe, and that is what happens when we use the pedals. The pedal to the right is called the *damper pedal*. Some people erroneously speak of it as the *loud pedal*, but we hope you will always call it by its right name. When you depress the damper pedal you will notice that a number of little pieces of wood are raised from the wires. When you release the damper pedal, these little *dampers* fall back into place so that the *felt* which is attached to each of them can rest on the wire and stop it from vibrating. By depressing the damper pedal you prolong the tone. This also makes the tone richer and fuller. That is why we like to use the damper pedal.

The pedal to the left is called the *soft pedal*. When it is depressed you will observe that the whole keyboard moves sidewise a little. This makes the hammers strike only one of the wires. That is why you find the use of the soft pedal indicated by the words *una corda*, which means *one string*.

The piano is a very intricate piece of machinery. Therefore you should take the greatest care of it. Your piano should be tuned regularly, at least twice a year. Whenever the piano tuner comes to your house you should watch him carefully and see just what he does and how he does it. Maybe he will explain some other details which we have not been able to tell you here.



*The Mozart Family*